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ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE REMAINS A THREAT TO NEW YORK CITY'S TREES

The New York City Department of Parks & Recreation today announced that the destructive Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) reappeared this summer in New York City. Asian longhorned beetles have been found infesting trees in the Upper East Side of Manhattan, Long Island City in Queens, and in the neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Prospect Heights in Brooklyn. New Yorkers are encouraged to help look for the ALB, which is about 1 to 1.5 inches long, has a shiny jet black body with distinctive white spots and long antennae that are banded with black and white.

“The Asian longhorned beetle can have a devastating impact on our nation’s trees,” said Parks & Recreation First Deputy Commissioner Liam Kavanagh. “The public is on the front lines of the effort to eliminate ALB—they are our eyes and ears, and we are grateful to all those who have called in reports of suspected infestation.”

“Most of the ALB infestations that have occurred this summer have been found by the public, not pest specialists,” said Michael Bohne, entomologist with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service. “The public plays such an important role in detecting infestations of ALB. Early detection of the beetle greatly increases the potential for successful eradication.”

The Asian longhorned beetle, native to China, Japan and Korea, is a voracious pest of our nation’s deciduous hardwood forests and urban landscape. It deposits eggs into healthy hardwood trees. After hatching, the developing ALB bores into healthy hardwood trees and feeds on living tree tissue during the larval stage. Later, throughout the summer, adult beetles emerge from exit holes and briefly feed on the small twigs and leaves of host trees. The ALB attacks many different hardwood trees including all species of maple, birch, horsechestnut, poplar, willow, elm, ash, mimosa (silk tree), hackberry, London plane, sycamore and mountain ash. Signs of an infested tree include round pits in tree bark, oozing sap, accumulation of sawdust (from larvae boring), and round exit holes. The ALB emerges in early July and becomes dormant in late October.

To fight this destructive pest and prevent it from spreading, agriculture officials have removed and destroyed more than 7,100 trees in New York—3,969 of which are in New York City. The goal is to eradicate this highly destructive insect from New York.

“Even though the Asian longhorned beetle doesn’t fly great distances, it can get around by hitching a ride in infested wood,” said Christine Markham, national ALB program director with USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Residents are asked not to move firewood or host tree materials out of the New York City quarantine areas as movement of these articles can unintentionally increase the spread of an

infestation. Transporting wood from established quarantined areas can be both a Federal and State offense. Violations can be punished with Federal fines of up to \$250,000.

In New York City, quarantine zones for ALB are all areas south of 125th Street in Manhattan, including Roosevelt, Wards and Randalls Islands; in Queens south of Little Neck Bay, north of the Jackie Robinson Parkway/Grand Central Parkway, and west from the Queens/Nassau line to the East River; and in Brooklyn, south of the Queens line, north of Linden Boulevard, and west of Liberty and Euclid Avenues to the East River.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, there are 5.2 million trees in New York City on both public and private property. Parks & Recreation cares for more than 2.5 million trees on City streets and in City parks. Residents are encouraged to find out if they live in an area regulated for ALB before moving firewood by calling 1-866-265-0301. To report a sighting of this unwanted guest to our city, call the USDA hotline at 1-877-STOP-ALB or 311.

APHIS, USDA Forest Service, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and New York City Department of Parks & Recreation participate in the Asian Longhorned Beetle Cooperative Eradication Program.

For more information, visit the APHIS Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov, click on Asian longhorned beetle under “Hot Issues.”

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